GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2769
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2007
VISIT OF THAILAND`S PRIME MINISTER TO INDIA
Singh Shri Sugrib

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has held discussions with the Thailand's Prime Minister during his recent visit to India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) Yes

(b) The Prime Minister of Thailand General Surayud Chulanont paid a State Visit to India from June 25 -27, 2007. He was accompanied by a 14-member official delegation that included the Thai Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Energy.

The two Prime Ministers discussed proposals for enhancing bilateral trade and investment, defence and security ties, connectivity and cultural cooperation.

Two agreements were signed during the visit including an MoU on Enhanced Cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy and an Executive Program on Cultural Exchange for the years 2007−2009. A Joint Press Statement was released at the end of the visit on June 26, 2007 (copy enclosed).

The State visit of the Prime Minister of Thailand to India in June 2007 helped maintain the momentum of bilateral ties. Both sides reiterated their strong commitment to engaging with each other and to utilise all available opportunities for mutual benefit.

ENCLOSURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (B) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2769 REGARDING 'VISIT OF THAILAND'S PRIME MINISTER TO INDIA' FOR ANSWER ON 05/12/2007

1. His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont (Ret.), the Prime Minister of Thailand paid a State Visit to India from 25-27 June 2007. The Prime Minister of Thailand was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Commerce and the Minister of Energy during his visit to India.

2. During the visit, he held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, on 26 June 2007 who hosted a banquet in honour of the visiting dignitary on the same day. The Minister of External Affairs, the Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of State for New and Renewable Energy called on the Prime Minister of Thailand on June 26, 2007. The Leader of the Opposition, Lok Sabha will call on the Prime Minister of Thailand on June 27, 2007. The Prime Minister of Thailand also addressed a Business Summit hosted by the CII, FICCI and the ASSOCHAM on 26 June 2007.

3. On 26 June 2007, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand called on the President of the Republic of India.

4. On 27 June 2007, the Prime Minister of Thailand will visit Varanasi and Sarnath.

5. During the visit of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand two important Agreements were signed in the presence of the two Prime Ministers, namely the Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy and the Cultural Exchange Programme.

6. During their discussions, the two Prime Ministers, expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in bilateral relations. They acknowledged that relations between the two countries which were based on age old historical, civilizational and cultural links had evolved beyond traditional areas of culture and commercial interaction to cooperation in all key areas, namely security, defence, civil aviation, science and technology, greater people to people interaction and a movement towards free trade. They emphasized the importance of utilizing and expanding the existing bilateral institutional frameworks to diversify and deepen the relationship between the two countries.

7. The two Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction that the bilateral trade volume between the two countries had crossed the US $ 3 billion mark with the implementation of the Early Harvest Scheme of the India-Thailand FTA. They expressed confidence that negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement would conclude at the earliest during the current year. They were also convinced that the

target of USD 4 billion bilateral trade volume by the end of 2007 was achievable.

8. Both Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction with the growing cooperation between the two countries in the area of defence and security. In this context, they acknowledged with appreciation the good work that was being done by the Joint Working Group on Security Cooperation. They also encouraged the concerned authorities to expedite negotiations of pending defence and security related Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding with a view to achieving their early conclusion and implementation. Recognizing that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, the two leaders condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as criminal and unjustifiable, irrespective of the motives. They resolved to strengthen bilateral cooperation to combat terrorism and to coordinate measures in a comprehensive and sustained manner.

9. The two Prime Ministers also discussed other promising areas of enhanced cooperation. In this context, they agreed to intensify efforts to further strengthen civil aviation cooperation. They encouraged concerned authorities and the private sector to look into possible methods of fisheries cooperation in accordance with domestic rules and regulations.

10. The two Prime Ministers agreed that relations between the two countries are poised and ready for a new level enhanced partnership. Thailand's 'Look West' policy and India's 'Look East' policy had become a perfect complement to one another and the relations between the two countries had grown both bilaterally and in the context of enhanced interaction with and within regional frameworks such as the ASEAN, ARF, BIMSTEC, MGC, ACD and the East Asia Summit.

11. The Indian Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the Royal Thai Government in response to the invitation of the Government of India to seek to develop closer economic and societal ties with the Northeastern States of India. In this context, the visit of the Minister of Commerce of Thailand to New Delhi to participate in the 3rd Northeast Business Summit and his visit to the Northeastern states of India from June 21-24, 2007 was referred to in the discussions between the two Prime Ministers.

12. The Prime Minister of India announced a contribution of Baht 10 million towards the construction budget of the new building of the Sanskrit Studies Centre in the Silpakorn University in Bangkok. The Sanskrit Studies Centre of the University has made significant contributions to the study of Sanskrit, Indian culture and historical and cultural links between India and Thailand. In this regard, the Prime Minister of Thailand noted with appreciation the aforementioned contribution from the Government of India which is a testament to the significant and valuable historical and cultural ties between the two countries.

13. The State Visit of the Prime Minister of Thailand took place during the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Thailand and was symbolic of the importance that both countries attached to their close and cordial relations with each other. The two countries will be organizing a series of events as part of the celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary year.

14. The Prime Minister of Thailand expressed his appreciation to the Prime Minister of India for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to him and members of his delegation and for all the excellent arrangements made for this State Visit.

New Delhi
26 June 2007